

# Washington State Patrol Media Release

**Chief Ronal W. Serpas**



## Office of the State Fire Marshal State Fire Marshal Mary Corso

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### ***“Hero” Acknowledged in Tacoma Nursing Home Fire***

Chief Ronal W. Serpas announced today that on November 22, 2003, an unheralded “hero” saved the lives of the residents at Regency of Tacoma Rehabilitation Center; a 153-licensed-bed nursing home.

The fire, which started in a resident room, was controlled by one fire sprinkler head. Fire crews estimate that they only used 1-2 gallons of water to completely extinguish the fire. The cause of the fire is under investigation.

Tacoma Fire Department Deputy Fire Marshal Kevin O'Donnal stated, “Given the time of night this fire occurred, there would most likely have been fire fatalities had there not been fire sprinklers in the room where the fire started. The fact that there were no serious injuries or fatalities as a result of this fire is a sharp contrast to the recent fire in a Connecticut care facility where 16 people died as the result of a fire in their building. Fire sprinklers do save lives, and this is why we in the fire service so strongly recommend and pursue the use of sprinklers in buildings.”

As a result of the fast action of the “hero,” fire, smoke, and water damage of approximately \$5,000 to the building and \$2,500 to the contents was confined primarily to the room of origin, with minimal water reaching the surrounding areas.

“This is the reason I call fire sprinklers *instant firefighters, on duty in your home or business* 24-7,” added State Fire Marshal Mary Corso.

The Office of the State Fire Marshal is a Bureau of the Washington State Patrol, providing fire and life safety services to the citizens of Washington State, including inspections of state-licensed facilities, plan review of school construction projects, licensing of fire sprinkler contractors and pyrotechnic operators, training Washington State’s firefighters, and collecting emergency response data. For additional information, you may visit our Web page at [www.wa.gov/wsp](http://www.wa.gov/wsp) and then click on “State Fire Marshal.”

For more information on ***fire sprinklers***, contact your local fire department or the Office of the State Fire Marshal at (360) 753-0400.

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